

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 have been examined. Applicants are amending claims 1, 4-8 and adding new claims 9-21. These amendments are made to further clarify the invention. Claims 1-21 are all the claims pending in the application.

This Amendment is believed to be fully responsive to each point of rejection raised by the Examiner in the Final Office Action, dated May 24, 2002. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims.

Rejection of Claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) - Hiroaki

The Examiner has rejected claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,786,846 (hereinafter Hiroaki). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The Examiner alleges that Figures 13A-13B and column 16, lines 14-21 of Hiroaki, teach the claimed means for guiding the operator's line of sight. However, the disclosure of Hiroaki fails to support such an interpretation.

Applicants' claimed invention provides a means for directing (i.e. guiding) the operator's line of sight to a specific location on the picture-phone device. The line of sight is the imaginable line between the operator's eyes and the selected location on the picture-phone. In accordance with our feature of the invention, the line of sight from the operator's eyes may be to the camera area or in the vicinity of the picture-phone.

Thus, the invention of the subject application helps assure that the operator is facing the camera and is looking at the camera as the picture-phone conversation takes place. No such invention is disclosed or suggested in Hiroaki.

Column 16, lines 13-21 of Hiroaki discloses that in Figure 13A, the arrow indicates only the deviation direction and thus the direction in which the local user should move to be in the camera's shoot range. Hiroaki also discloses in Figure 13B, a message on the display which shows the direction the local user should move to be in the camera's field of view. In sum, Hiroaki provides information to the user about his/her position relative to the camera's field of view (i.e. shoot range). This feature has nothing to do with guiding the operator's eyes toward a camera or other specific location on the picture phone.

Indeed, the Hiroaki disclosed system is applicable even if the user's back is turned to the camera, or if an inanimate object, rather than a local user, is in the camera's field of view. In this regard, the operator would move the object into the camera's field of view without regard to whether or not a user's line of sight was also directed toward the camera. As above noted, the object can be an inanimate one, which according to Hiroaki, is moved into the camera's field of view prompted by, for example, the arrow of Figure 13A, without regard to the line of sight from an operator to the camera. In short, Hiroaki has nothing to do with the invention of the subject application.

Indisputably, Hiroaki is silent as to guiding the operator's line of sight from his/her eyes toward a designated location on the picture phone. The function of the information of Hiroaki as shown in Figures 13a and 13b is completely different from that of the claimed means for

guiding. As above explained, Applicants' claimed means for guiding directs the operator's eyes toward the camera during a conversation. In Hiroaki, the information helps keep an object in the shoot range of the camera, regardless whether or not the object is a person and if a person, regardless whether or not the person is facing the camera. The concepts are completely different.

For at least these reasons, Hiroaki fails to teach the claimed means for guiding the operator's line of sight to the imaging portion. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of independent claim 1 and dependent claim 2.

Rejection of Claims 3-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) - Hiroaki and Ota

The Examiner has rejected claims 3-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Hiroaki in view of JP363276352A (hereinafter Ota). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants note that claims 3-8 depend from claim 1 and that Ota fails to compensate for the deficiencies of Hiroaki with respect to claim 1. Therefore, claims 3-8 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency on claim 1.

New claims 9-21 are also patentable at least by virtue of their dependency on claim 1.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Application No. 09/739,619

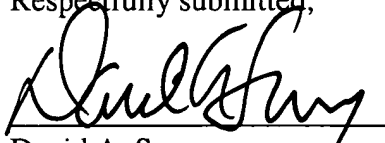
Attorney Docket No. Q62422

Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

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APPENDIX

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

The claims are amended as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A picture-phone device for an operator to exchange images and voices with the party on the other end via a communication circuit comprising:

an imaging portion,

an image display portion, and

means for guiding the operator's line of sight ~~to a specific direction~~ toward said imaging portion.

4. (Once Amended) The picture-phone device claimed in claim 3, wherein said indicating means is a light flashing system for guiding the ~~caller's~~ operator's line of sight by light emission.

5. (Once Amended) The picture-phone device claimed in claim 4, wherein ~~at~~ the light flashing system is provided near the imaging portion.

6. (Once Amended) The picture-phone device claimed in claim ~~52~~, wherein said indicating means is a caption outputting system for projecting a special visual image in order to guide the caller's operator's line of sight ~~to a specific direction on the image display portion in the picture phone device.~~

7. (Once Amended) The picture-phone device claimed in claim 6, wherein at the special visual image is an arrow for pointing ~~the position where~~ to the imaging portion ~~is installed.~~

8. (Once Amended) The picture-phone device claimed in claim 6, wherein at the special visual image is a variation of characters, patterns or backgrounds in order to guide the operator's line of sight toward the imaging portion.

Claims 9-21 are added as new claims.